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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PINS](#) [PNAT](#) [PTER](#) [KDEM](#) [KISL](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: SADR CITY LOCAL LEADERS SAY SISTANI STATEMENT WILL  
NOT CHANGE JAYSH AL-MAHDI'S WAYS

REF: A. BAGHDAD 896

[1](#)B. BAGHDAD 374

Classified By: ACTING POLITICAL COUNSELOR MICHAEL J. ADLER FOR REASONS  
1.4 (B) AND (D).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: In an April 30 meeting with PolOff, Sadr City District Advisory Council (DAC) members Ali Suadi and Ahmed Hassan said the Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM) would not disband simply because of Grand Ayatollah al-Sistani's April 27 statement that weapons should only be carried by government forces. JAM, they said, is beyond the control of Sistani, and even Muqtada al-Sadr, and would not yield. They added, however, that PM-designate Nuri al-Maliki would have much popular support if he attempted to disarm JAM and other militias. They went on to say that extra-judicial sharia courts continue to operate in Sadr City, enforcing the hard-line Sadrism agenda. Suadi and Hassan both said that UIC independent Qassim Daoud would be a great candidate for Minister of Interior because he could effectively stand up to the militias and insurgents. End Summary.

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Sistani's Statement Will Not Affect JAM  
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[1](#)2. (C) In an April 30 meeting with PolOff, Sadr City DAC members Ali Suadi and Ahmed Hassan predicted that Grand Ayatollah Sistani's statement that the carrying of weapons should be restricted to government forces would not have an effect on JAM membership. JAM members, they said, "do not believe in God or Grand Ayatollah Sistani." Even if Muqtada al-Sadr wanted to disband JAM, they argued, he does not fully control JAM and probably could not do so. At any rate, they said, JAM is believed to be responsible for the deaths of six people over the last weeks. When JAM kills people, they said, they make a deal with the Iraq Police (IP) to take the body to either a morgue or a hospital.

[1](#)3. (C) According to Suadi and Hassan, many Iraqis in Sadr City would support PM-designate Nuri Kamel al-Maliki if he decided to act against militias, including JAM. Many Sadr City residents, they said, feel victimized by JAM. Suadi and Hassan are confident that JAM can be successfully confronted. As an example, they recounted the story of the head of the Sadr Bureau in Sadr City, Abdul Zara al-Suadi. Upon hearing rumors that MNF-I planned to arrest him, he immediately fled to Lebanon.

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Sharia Courts Are Still a Problem  
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[1](#)5. (C) Suadi and Hassan said that extrajudicial sharia courts operate in every section of Sadr City (ref B). They said

these courts are directed by Ibrahim al-Jabiri, brother of former Sadr City DAC member Kareem al-Jabiri. (NOTE: Jabiri now serves as the Assistant Director General of the Al-Dhilal State Company for Cargo and Passengers. End Note.). Jabiri, they said, travels freely throughout Sadr City, with no interference from Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). Extrajudicial sharia courts, according to Suadi and Hassan, still prosecute Sadr City residents for "offenses" such as women not covering their heads.

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STRONG MOI NEEDED TO FRIGHTEN THE SADRISTS  
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¶6. (C) Suadi and Hassan said the next Minister of Interior should be Qassim Daoud because he "frightens the Sadrists." Selection of Daoud, they argued, would send a clear message that the GOI is serious about taking on Shia militias and insurgents. Former Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, they said, would be an even better MOI pick, but they noted that he would never accept the position.

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COMMENT  
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¶7. (C) Suadi and Hassan offered views that are shared by many of our anti-Sadrism Sadr City contacts -- particularly that a strong Prime Minister and Minister of Interior are needed to stand up to militias. As the Sadrists seek to tighten their control over Sadr City, more residents seem to think the solution is to use sticks, rather than carrots. Some appear hopeful that the PM-designate is the man to bring the JAM under control.  
KHALILZAD